

"Elegant" and "witty" are just two of the words that come to mind when friends are asked to describe Mrs. Norwood and she is known to freely share from her wealth of "experience driven" information.

In 1912, William Taft was president of the United States, Emmet O'Neal was governor of Alabama, segregation was a way of life, and, on November 16, Onie Belle Carter was born in the "Heart of Dixie," known as Union Springs, Alabama. She was the eldest daughter of the eight children born to the late Mr. & Mrs. Willie Carter. They were a hardworking family that pulled together to make ends meet. While many things seemed impossible, Onie Belle would soon discover that "all things are possible."

While the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote (1919) was ratified and the Ku Klux Klan boasted a membership of over 4.5 million members, Onie accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as her personal Savior at First Baptist Church in Alabama. She worked hard and served as secretary for the Sunday school and the BYPU. After the death of her father as a young girl, Onie was forced to leave school and take on the responsibility of helping her mother provide for her sisters and brothers. It was the Red Summer of 1919 where race riots broke out across the country including in Chicago, Illinois, Washington, D.C. and Knoxville, Indianapolis. In 1920, less than 400 miles away, a Black-run town called Rosewood was being attacked and burned to the ground. Understanding the importance of an education, Onie traveled to Montgomery, Alabama to attend the H. A. Loveless Middle School.

In 1938, Fiorello LaGuardia was mayor of a bustling city called New York, where, just four years earlier, the now famous Apollo Theatre held its first live show, and Onie Belle, a twenty-six year old country girl from Alabama accepted an invitation for "live-in" work in Kew Gardens, Queens, New York so she could send money back to her mother. Onie and her mother prayed that God would protect her in this huge city.

Onie was a warm, friendly person who kept her business to herself. She was drawn to the Thursday "socials" that were a "meeting time" for many day workers, porters and laborers. That same year she met and married Clarence Norwood.

The sounds of Harlem echoed in Onie's ear and she enjoyed visiting the Apollo Theatre every week where the place was "jumpin'" with the sounds of Count Basie, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington and Nat King Cole. In 1939, Billie Holiday first performed a song entitled "Strange Fruit" in New York City which protested the horrid act of lynching. Some of the more popular cabarets and clubs in Harlem such as the Cotton Club, Connie's Inn, and Smalls Paradise were frequented by Whites and did not allow Blacks. Onie found herself in the midst of a changing nation. Onie sought to survive through hard work, diligence and determination.

On March 19, 1941, the 99th Pursuit Squadron became the first African-American active combat unit and Onie joined the war effort working for the Department of Defense making duffle bags and suspender belts for soldiers. After the war, she secured employment in factories making belts. On June 25th, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, the "Fair Employment Act", to re-

quire equal treatment and training of all employees by defense contractors. In that same year, Mitchell v US, the Interstate Commerce Clause is used to successfully desegregate seating on trains. The country was changing and thirty something year old Onie was changing with it. The Civil Rights movement was in full swing and forcing America to deal with life-changing decisions.

Feeling her soul was not satisfied, Onie joined St. John's Baptist Church on West 152nd Street in Harlem under the pastorate of Rev. Dr. Wilson Major Morris in 1950. She has been an active member every since serving under the second pastor, Rev. Walter C. T. Willoughby and the present pastor, Rev. Dr. John Luster Scott. She is often heard saying how she "loves her Pastor and her Church family." Onie's magnetic personality attracts many young and old. Her favorite "suitors" are Christopher Williams, William "Sonny" Gamble and Ernest DeVerger. Presently retired from the Chimera Belt Factory, she still enjoys going to Church, taking pictures, shopping and listening to music.

A long time Harlemite, she has seen a century of great changes take place in her life, the Church, the Nation and African-American people, including the granting of the right to vote to women and the great Civil Rights Movement. She has seen the Ku Klux Klan membership dwindle to less than 8,000; 81 African-American mayors including John McGowan (1984) of her hometown of Union Springs, Alabama and David Dinkins (1988) of New York City; 3 "first" African-American governors; nearly 100 Members of the House of Representatives; 4 African-American Senators and one African-American President, her favorite, President Barack Obama. She has lived through 19 US presidents, 3 pastors and a multitude of African-American leaders and innovators. She keeps her favorite Bible verse close, Psalm 121, which begins, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." On November 16, 2012 Onie Belle Norwood will be 100 years old. Blessed indeed, she has seen her prayers answered—a God who kept her safe in New York City.

I ask my colleagues and our Nation to join me in this special Congressional Recognition of the 100th Birthday of a true patriot and Harlem legend Mrs. Onie Bell Norwood.

#### HONORING CYNTHIA PALMER

#### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 29, 2012

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker and fellow colleagues I rise today to honor a worthy member of our society Mrs. Cynthia Palmer. Mrs. Cynthia Palmer was born in Los Angeles, California but was raised in Canton, Mississippi and attended Holy Child Jesus School. After her family relocated to Jackson, she attended Brinkley Jr. High School and Callaway High School where she excelled in all areas. Cynthia was chosen as the first Black "Miss Callaway High School" & the first black female "Student Body President" among many other honors. She attended Tougaloo College and majored in Business Communications and was listed on the Dean's List.

Music has been a passion of Cynthia's from a very early age. Throughout her career, Mrs.

Palmer has received world-wide acclamation while participating in various local, state, national and international events. She has toured in more than 35 of the 50 United States and has performed in the following countries: Alaska, Canada, Bermuda, West Indies, England, Germany, France, Brazil and Holland. One of the highlights of her travels was to sing in Cape Town, Umtata and Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA. In 2003, Cynthia was featured on the "Bobby Jones Gospel Show" on The Word Network. She is a 3-time winner at the Mississippi Gospel Music Awards. One of the blessings of her career was being able to sing to women who are currently on Death Row at the Alabama State Prison.

She has appeared on radio and television stations throughout the United States and abroad. She was the first gospel singer to sing at the Jewish synagogue in Dayton, Ohio. Cynthia has participated on concerts featuring such artists as Mary Mary, Byron Cage, Shirley Caesar, Richard Smallwood, Bishop Paul Morton, Rev. Marvin Sapp, The Canton Spirituals and Rance Allen just to name a few.

She has recorded and self-produced 5 CD's, entitled "JUST ENOUGH FAITH TO TRY", "ANOINTED PSALMS OF PRAISE", "A SOULFUL CHRISTMAS", "HEAVEN IS THE PLACE TO BE" and "THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION". Cynthia produced the highly successful CD titled, "Gospel Praises, Volume 1" for MESSAGE MAGAZINE, the oldest black religious magazine in the country.

In 2004, after relocating back to Mississippi, Cynthia founded the Canton Gospel Music Association (CGMA). One of the main focuses of the organization is to raise monies to pay for music lessons for up and coming musicians in addition to awarding scholarships to graduating seniors. To date, the COMA has awarded over \$12,000.00 to over 60 students.

In 2005, she served as Executive Producer for "The Gospel at Colonus" presented by the Mississippi Opera. Most recently she served as Operations Director for the Return of the Freedom Riders, 50th Year Reunion celebrated in Jackson in May 2011. Most recently, Cynthia worked at Jackson State University as the Resources and Media Technology Manager for the Margaret Walker Alexander National Research Center. Currently, she is the Executive Director of the Veterans of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement, Inc.

Mrs. Palmer, was presented with a Public Service Award by the Robinson-Watson Book Company for the State of Mississippi at the 20th Year Honors Awards Celebration Banquet on June 26, 2009. The Public Service recipient is involved in the community during the year (s) working with various groups or agencies. They have succeeded in exercising their unselfishness in making an impact on the general Mississippi community and society. She is also listed in the inaugural edition of "Who's Who" in Black Mississippi. She is a member of the board of Directors of The Mississippi Opera, United Christian Artist Association, Women For Progress and MADDDRAMA Performance Troupe. Mrs. Palmer has been a contributing writer to The Mississippi Link Newspaper and the Metro Christian Magazine. In 2010, she was featured on the cover of the Metro Christian Magazine.

Mrs. Palmer has served on the following committees: Jackson State University's Church Music Workshop of America, Commemorative Stamp Ceremony honoring

Medgar Evers & Fannie Lou Hamer, Mission Mississippi Mayor's Prayer Breakfast and Governor's Prayer Luncheon, among others. In 2003, Mayor Alice Scott, of Canton, Mississippi presented the 'Key to the City' to Mrs. Palmer and proclaimed October 3 as "Cynthia Goodloe Palmer Day".

She is a singer, song writer, producer, entrepreneur, friend, humble servant and a lover of people. Her personal testimony is: 'In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths' Proverbs 3:6.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Cynthia Palmer for her dedication to serving others.

# CLOTHE A HOMELESS HERO ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 27, 2012*

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6328, the "Jamie Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act," which Directs the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration [TSA]) to transfer unclaimed clothing recovered at airport security checkpoints to local veterans organizations or other local charitable organizations for distribution to homeless or needy veterans and their families. Moreover, it authorizes the Assistant Secretary to enter into agreements with airport authorities for disposing of such clothing.

In my home state of Texas, we have nearly 1.7 million veterans. I represent 18th District in Texas which is home to over 32,000 veterans. Of the 200,000 veterans of military service who live and work in Houston; more than 13,000 are veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Veteran homelessness has been a substantial problem going back to at least the Vietnam era.

An estimated 10–16 percent of our nation's homeless population (between 76,000–136,000) are veterans.

Nearly one in seven homeless adults are veterans, as of \* \* \*

More than 67,000 homeless veterans were counted on a given January night in America last year. More than 4 in 10 homeless veterans were found unsheltered.

Almost half of homeless veterans were African American in 2008 despite the fact that only 11 percent of veterans overall are African American.

1.5 million veterans are at risk of homelessness due to poverty, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing.

30.2 percent of veterans ages 18 to 24 were unemployed according to unpublished 2011 Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Nearly 1 in 10 veterans with disabilities were not employed in 2010.

According to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, a 2007 survey showed that more than one-third of employers were unaware of protections they must provide to servicemembers, and more than half spent less than 2 percent of their recruitment budget

on military advertising and/or did not understand the qualifications of military service.

In that same survey more than half of all veterans were unsure of how to professionally network, and nearly three in four felt unprepared to negotiate salary and benefits and/or unable to effectively translate military skills.

More than 968,000 of veterans ages 18 to 64 had been in poverty in the past year in 2010.

More than 33,000 veterans were housed since 2009 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs in permanent, supportive housing with case managers and access to VA health care.

\$31 million of SNAP/food stamps funding in 2008 was spent at military commissaries to help feed military members and their families who struggle against hunger.

A veteran lives in one in five households benefiting from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which provides heating and cooling assistance.

After serving this country and protecting our rights and freedoms, these veterans often sustain debilitating injuries or post-traumatic stress that make readjusting to life in the U.S. an arduous task. It is often difficult for them to find jobs and as they slip further into hopelessness, they become more susceptible to drug abuse and violent acts which can lead to homelessness.

This is a disturbing trend that must end. Surely, in this great nation, we can provide for those who fought to defend us. As our men and women in the armed forces have served us, it is our duty to, in turn, serve them.

H.R. 6328 is a step in the right direction towards finding creative solutions for the basic needs of certain veterans. By using unclaimed clothing that has been left at airports is a wonderful way to help ensure that veterans who have fallen on hard times have access to clothing.

With the epidemic of depression, anxiety, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in our military, along with the burden of long and repeated deployment during our nation's most recent wars, we must be vigilant about combating the issue of homelessness among our nation's heroes.

Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have remained committed to meeting both the needs of veterans of previous wars, and to those who are now serving. Veterans have kept their promise to serve our nation; they have willingly risked their lives to protect the country we all love. We must now ensure that we keep our promises to our veterans.

I have introduced and supported legislation that increases medical services to our troops, veterans and their families. I recently introduced a measure that resulted in \$500,000 additional funding for PTSD research and treatment. Yet, as we work to improve the physical and mental health of our returning heroes; we must also work to ensure that our service men and women retain their dignity when they return home, and providing them with access to clothes is the least we can do to honor their service. For that reason, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6328, the "Clothe a Homeless Hero Act," on Suspension.

U.N. IS NOT THE FORUM FOR RESOLVING MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS

**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 29, 2012*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, the United Nations will vote on whether or not to recognize the Palestinian Authority as a non-member observer state of the U.N. With 132 nations having already recognized the Palestinian territory as a sovereign state and only 97 votes needed, I suspect the Palestinian Authority's effort will be successful. Yet, despite a ceasefire reached between Israel and Hamas last week, the Middle East remains a volatile tinder box far from peace. Admitting the Palestinian Authority as a nonmember observer state will hurt, not help, a peace process that is already on shaky ground.

The United States has opposed the Palestinian Authority's effort from the very beginning because it recognizes the instability that such recognition would create. The Palestinian Authority wants all the benefits of a state, without any of the responsibility. They fully admit that they don't know what their borders are. By definition, a state is a geographic territory with a sovereign government. Yes, there are some countries with border disputes, such as India and Pakistan in the Kashmir region, but the Palestinians have not agreed upon border whatsoever. What is a state if it can't define its own land?

The Palestinians themselves agreed to resolve statehood issues at the negotiating table in the Oslo Accords (which means they are required to negotiate bilaterally with Israel). Now they are figuratively walking away from the negotiating table and literally blowing it up with attacks from Hamas. Meanwhile, Israel continues to help the Palestinian economy, including collecting over \$100 million a month in taxes for the Palestinians and allowing more and more Palestinians to travel to the West Bank. One thing is for sure: it is not Israel that is holding up the peace process.

With upgraded status at the U.N. come certain benefits. Here lies the real desire for the Palestinian U.N. gambit. A Palestinian state could bring war crimes charges against Israel in the International Criminal Court, putting the fate of Israelis in the hands of some international judge. This Court is so dangerous that even President Obama refuses to allow Americans to be prosecuted by it. The Palestinian Authority remains fiercely committed to bringing Israel to the International Criminal Court. Many of the nations who support Palestinian Statehood have requested assurance that Israel would be left alone if statehood was granted. The Palestinian Authority defiantly rejected these requests. Just yesterday, Hanan Ashrawi, a senior member of the PLO said: "We have not succumbed to pressure, we did not give any commitment." The world should know they mean what they say; granting them this request means endangering Israel.

Yes, the Palestinians may be successful today and no, the U.S. does not have veto power in a U.N. General Assembly vote, but there still can and should be consequences for the irresponsible actions of President Abbas and his old cronies in the Palestinian Liberation Organization, PLO. Last year, we gave